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**Department of Commerce and Insurance  
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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Tennessee Attorney General's Office Teams Up with the Ad Council for  
New Youth Reckless Driving Prevention Campaign**

Tennessee Attorney General Bob Cooper's Office is partnering with The Advertising Council on a new campaign aimed at putting the brakes on fatal car crashes involving teens and young adults.

The joint effort includes the Ad Council (a leading producer of public service advertisements), a coalition of state Attorneys General and consumer protection agencies, and national partners such as SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) and AAA (American Automobile Association), to promote the new *UR the Spokesperson* campaign to prevent reckless driving and save lives. The campaign is funded by money from a 2002 settlement between the 50 states and Ford Motor Company. A portion of the settlement money was allocated for public education campaigns.

Car crashes are the number one cause of death among teens and young adults. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration data show that, on average, more than 300,000 teens are injured in car crashes each year, nearly 8,000 are involved in fatal crashes and more than 3,500

are killed. NHTSA research also shows that teen drivers are involved in more than five times as many fatal crashes as adults. Young drivers are more likely to speed, run red lights, make illegal turns and die in an SUV rollover.

With the message “Speak Up,” the *UR the Spokesperson* campaign targets young adults between the ages of 15 and 21 and encourages them to be the spokesperson against reckless driving by empowering them to speak up when they are in the car with friends and don’t feel safe. The campaign also seeks to increase awareness about the dangers of reckless driving and educate teens on how to be safe drivers by focusing on safe speeds, avoiding distractions, and wearing seat belts.

“We feel this campaign is important to help save lives,” said Attorney General Cooper. “We hope young Tennesseans will take the initiative to speak up and tell drivers when they feel their friends are driving dangerously.”

The *UR the Spokesperson* campaign includes a series of public service advertisements (PSAs), a new Web site and a soon-to-be launched contest. Created pro bono by North Castle, a Stamford, Conn.-based advertising agency that specializes in reaching teens, the PSAs target teen passengers, rather than the driver, and encourage them to speak up when they don’t feel safe. Research shows that young drivers may be more likely to listen to their friends than to adults. When it is a friend who speaks up, a teenage driver will listen because they don’t want to damage the friendship or be labeled a bad driver.

“We want it to become not only socially acceptable, but socially expected for teens to speak up when they are riding with a friend and don’t feel safe,” said Peggy Conlon, President and CEO of the Ad Council. “We also want to educate them about the dangers and consequences of reckless driving by reminding them to drive safely, wear their seat belts and limit distractions.”

For more information on the campaign and to see the ads, please visit [www.URtheSpokesperson.com](http://www.URtheSpokesperson.com).